

The LIFENET Newsline

SPRING 1998

Five Minutes to Live!

On the crisp, sunny morning of January 31st, God's providence led Maria* to LIFENET's Pro-Life rally on Broad Street in Newark. Maria knew her seventeen-year-old friend Lisa* was pregnant and planning to abort. Maria gave Lisa the pro-life literature she received at the rally — which included a list of New Jersey pregnancy centers — and as a result, Lisa skipped her scheduled appointment for an abortion!

Instead she went with her boyfriend to Gateway Pregnancy Center in Irvington for counseling. Dean Gavaris, Gateway's Executive Director, counseled Lisa, while another Gateway counselor spoke with Lisa's boyfriend. Dean told Lisa about Sonya Jackson's experience: in jail, facing a long sentence for drug dealing, and wanting to get out of jail to have an abortion. Lisa learned about the high-profile court battle which ensued, and how many pro-life people, representing different elements of the pro-life movement worked together to help Sonya and her unborn baby.

Dean told her that Sonya decided to choose life and now has a beautiful

10-month-old baby girl, named Elva Messiah. Dean also explained that since then, Sonya has turned her life around; she is working full-time, and has just completed her miraculously reduced jail sentence. He went on to tell her that Sonya now helps to save other women and their unborn children from abortion, and has had women in crisis pregnancies stay with her overnight on occasion. When Lisa expressed her intention to carry her baby to term, Dean gave Lisa more information to

"Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter."

Proverbs 24:11

read at home and referred her to a nearby hospital for obstetrical care.

After Lisa and her boyfriend had left, one of the Gateway volunteers found literature on the floor and assumed Lisa had accidentally left it behind. She mailed the literature to Lisa. Several days later Lisa called to ask why Gateway had sent her the literature. It turned out the literature found on the floor had not been Lisa's. During this phone conversation, Lisa told Dean: "I'm getting an abortion tomorrow at the Mini-Surgi Center in Newark." Dean asked her to come back to Gateway right away — but Lisa never showed up. Later that evening, LIFENET President Bill Calvin and Dean anxiously discussed the urgent need to intercept Lisa before her morning abortion appointment.



Rev. Dean Gavaris, Elva Messiah Jackson, and Bill Calvin taping TV show in Newark.

At eight the next morning, Dean and Sonya Jackson arrived at the clinic. Sonya entered quickly only to learn Lisa was already upstairs and five minutes away from aborting her baby. Not knowing what Lisa looks like, Sonya asked the receptionist to call Lisa's name.

When Lisa came out to see who was calling her — Sonya's first words were "I'm Sonya Jackson." Lisa replied: "I know who you are. Dean Gavaris told me about you." Sonya said: "You know why I'm here. Are you coming with me?" Lisa looked Sonya right in the eye and slowly nodded yes. The two women left the abortion mill, met Dean and went out together for breakfast.

Over breakfast, Lisa told Sonya and Dean that at the mill she had been shown a fuzzy sonogram of "her baby" which was just a mass that didn't look like anything. After breakfast they took her to see LIFENET speaker and obstetrician Dr. Jose Arrunategui. An accurate sonogram, showing how well developed her baby is, was a pleasant shock to Lisa. The pro-life community led by Rev. Dean Gavaris continues to work together in support of Lisa as she looks forward to the birth of her baby this summer!



Sonya Jackson sharing her testimony in Englewood.

* Name changed

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